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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 001752

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: QATAR: S/I JEFFREY'S OCTOBER 6, 2005 MEETING WITH  
FOREIGN MINISTER HAMAD BIN JASSIM AL-THANI

Classified By: Amb. Chase Untermeyer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11](#). (C) Summary: Senior Advisor on Iraq James Jeffrey and an interagency team that included representatives from the NSC, DOD, and Treasury met with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani (HBJ) on October 6. HBJ assured the U.S. delegation that Qatar was committed to winning the war in Iraq and stressed the importance of preventing Iraq from becoming a breeding ground for terror. HBJ pressed the delegation to give more time to allow for greater Sunni participation in the political process and insisted that de-Ba'athification focus only on top Ba'ath party leadership. He also said that per the USG's requests Qatar had raised with the Syrians the latter's failure to address the issue of insurgents crossing from Syria into Iraq and had urged the Iranians to not interfere in Iraq. HBJ also indicated that Qatar remains committed to forgiving Iraq's external debt, but he showed sensitivity to pressure when asked about Qatar's policies on Al Jazeera. End Summary

Iraq/GWOT

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[12](#). (C) HBJ emphasized that despite the all of the criticism Qatar had shouldered for its support of the war in Iraq, it was committed to victory there. "When you succeed in this war, we all succeed," HBJ told Jeffrey, stressing the importance of Iraq in preserving stability in the region and of the need to prevent Iraq from becoming a terrorist breeding ground from which terrorists could strike Qatar and the Gulf, as well as Europe and the U.S. HBJ felt that states in the region were not adequately sharing information, which he suggested that if done on a weekly basis could provide a clearer picture of the situation in Iraq. He also expressed his firm opposition to Bremer's plan for categorical de-Ba'athification within Iraq, insisting that "you could not get a job in Saddam's Iraq without being Ba'athist."

Iraqi Constitution

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[13](#). (C) HBJ advised Jeffrey and delegation that "even if it takes two to three months," it was absolutely necessary to secure Sunni Arab support for the constitution, predicting that without Sunni buy-in the constitution would be rejected and another year of political wrangling would ensue. Jeffrey pointed out that that the parties had dithered for months, at the expense of American and Iraqi lives, and it was ultimately the deadline that pressed them to produce the constitution. Jeffrey praised the constitution, but noted that Ambassador Khalilzad believed that additions should be made, including regarding de-Ba'athification and to clarify what action would be taken against the former senior leadership. When asked by HBJ whether Chalabi had the ear of the USG, Jeffrey made clear that the USG does not support any one person or party, but added that he would not listen to Chalabi on de-Ba'athification.

Arab Police Force

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[14](#). (C) Referring to a proposal that HBJ had previously transmitted to General Abazaïd, HBJ touched on his idea that an Islamic police force should be deployed in Iraqi cities to reduce the American presence there and to leave fewer American targets for insurgents to attack. "Then the (insurgents) will be killing Arabs, not Americans," HBJ explained. The proposed police force would be composed of Muslims from countries in the region (with the exception of Syria). BG Mike Jones, representing the Joint Staff, requested more detail on the composition and capability of the force, pointing out that though some countries are good at peacekeeping Iraq is not currently peaceful. Some countries may resist the kind of rules of engagement that success in a environment like Iraq requires. Further, any such force would have to have the express support of the Iraqi government to operate. Jeffrey added that any such force would require fighting elements as this would be a combat mission, but acknowledged that the Qataris need an official response to their proposal from the USG.

Sunni Leaders

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[15](#). (C) On the subject of Sunni leadership, HBJ cautioned that Americans should be careful not to "insult" Sunni tribal

chiefs, who will not easily forget perceived insults and could prove difficult to work with for years to come. HBJ said that the USG should "press its) policy on them slowly." "Let them play the game," and in this way build mutual respect. Jeffrey agreed and asked for Qatar's help in identifying specific leaders with whom the USG should work. HBJ replied that his Executive Assistant had already passed names to former Ambassador Maureen Quinn. After some discussion about the head of the Iraqi Muslim Ulema Council, Jeffrey warned HBJ about talking to people with blood on their hands.

#### Diplomatic Help: Iran, Syria, and Iraq

16. (C) HBJ told Jeffrey and delegation, "The Iranians are interfering in Iraq. They want to keep you busy with this job." Jeffrey responded that he hoped that HBJ had told the Iranian foreign minister not to interfere, which he affirmed he had. Responding to a misconception heard elsewhere, Jeffrey told HBJ that, "we are not opening the door to the Iranians. No one is more opposed to the Iranians than the U.S. We fought a two-year naval war in 1986-88) against them." Jeffrey also instructed HBJ that the Qataris, as friends of the U.S., needed to talk frankly with the Syrians to discourage them from deliberately closing their eyes to the passage of foreign fighters into Iraq. HBJ said he had done so within the past few days, as requested.

17. (C) Jeffrey told HBJ that the U.S. needs help"from Arab countries that are on the fence," and that an exchange of ambassadors by Qatar and Iraq would be helpful. HBJ said he would consider the Jeffrey,s offer that the U.S. provide safe housing for a Qatari ambassador.

#### Iraqi Debt

18. (C) When encouraged by Treasury representative MacDonald to reengage with the Iraqis on Iraq,s external debt, HBJ responded that the USG had his word that "at the right time Qatar) will be helpful." HBJ noted that Qatar was the only country that pledged to help during Jim Baker,s January 2004 visit, but even so the Iraqi government had not "mentioned" Qatar,s willingness to forgive its external debt. HBJ pledged to work with Ambassador Untermeyer and assured the delegation that it could rely on Qatar. MacDonald said an announcement along those lines would be helpful, as would Qatar,s receiving the Iraqi finance minister and encouraging countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to do the same.

#### Al Jazeera

19. (C) HBJ ensured Jeffrey and delegation that Qatar was "working hard to improve it," but that they did not want their relationship with the U.S. to be affected by this issue. He said that Qatar can deliver on a wide range of issues, recalling that Qatar "supported your policy on Israel, on energy "We were the first country to allow joint ventures," and stated that Qatar deserves to be considered a serious small partner by the U.S. HBJ indicated that they were very sensitive to pressure on Al Jazeera. He told the delegation, "I wish I could close Al Jazeera. Some journalists think I own 40% of it. If that were true, I would sell it."

110. (C) HBJ expressed his willingness to continue dialogue with the USG and stated he would report the meeting to the Amir. HBJ also stated that he would meet with Ambassador Untermeyer within a week to continue the discussion.

UNTERMEYER